

ELIZABETH J. COOK.

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FEBRUARY 2, 1895.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. MOSES, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 8401.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 8401) to grant pension to Elizabeth J. Cook, have considered the same and respectfully report as follows:

The claimant is the widow of the late Robert T. Cook, of Arkadelphia, Clark County, Ark., who is shown to have served as a soldier in the war with Mexico, but of whose service no record can now be found at the War Department.

Mrs. Cook has made application at the Pension Office under the Mexican war act of January 29, 1887, but the case has been regarded as inadmissible because of the aforesaid inability to find a record of the soldier's service.

Your committee has before them, however, convincing proof that, notwithstanding the failure to discover a record, the soldier did serve as alleged. John C. Peay, an aged citizen of very high standing, of Little Rock, Ark., swears that he was second lieutenant in Company E, First Arkansas Mounted Infantry, in the war with Mexico; that the regiment was mustered at Washington, Ark., and while stationed there Robert T. Cook was employed in the commissary department, and when the regiment left for San Antonio, Tex., Cook continued with the organization as commissary sergeant.

The witness testifies further that he saw Cook several times on the march to San Antonio, and also on the march from Rio Grande to Saltillo, Mexico. Witness was subsequently assigned to picket duty, and when he last saw Cook in the service he was on duty at Saltillo about December 20, 1846, and he (witness) was officially informed that Cook remained at said place in service as late as January or February, 1847. After the war witness was well acquainted with Cook in Arkansas, and often conversed with him about their military service in Mexico.

Correspondence with the War Department by your committee elicits the information that the service of Lieutenant Peay is a matter of record.

Mr. Cook's service is further shown by the testimony of Lewis Stardage, formerly a slave belonging to the mother of Mrs. Cook. This witness testifies to having a distinct recollection of the time when Mr. Cook joined the company of cavalry for the Mexican war, and was absent several months. After his return home Mr. Cook said he had been to Mexico, and often related incidents connected with his service in that country.

Another old-time acquaintance of the claimant and her husband, Mr. W. H. Calloway, of Clark County, Ark., swears that as early as 1855, when there was no idea of pensions being granted to Mexican war veterans, he heard Robert T. Cook relate circumstances connected with his service in Mexico, and further that Cook was a man of honor and integrity.

The claimant was married to the soldier December 7, 1843, and he died June 14, 1880. She is now about 67 years old, and stands in much need of the pension provided by the bill.

The passage of the bill is respectfully recommended, with an amendment striking out all after the word "Mexico" in line 9 to and including the word "troops" in line 11 and substituting therefor the words, "in the First Arkansas Mounted Infantry Volunteers."